



Laurinda Atwood



Joseph Lee Robinson

## LAURINDA MARIA ATWOOD ROBINSON

By Iris Montague Spafford

**Laurinda Maria Atwood Robinson** was born May 3, 1821, in Mansfield, Connecticut. She was the eighth child of Elisha and Anna Hartshorn Atwood.

**Laurinda "Rinda"** was slight in stature and beautiful in appearance. She had blue expressive eyes; peaches and cream complexion; and long shiny brown hair; all of which underlined her Anglo-Saxon heritage. She was a happy soul and loved to sing. She taught her children her love of music, which helped to lift her family's spirits. **Laurinda** loved to entertain and only follows that her family would join her in this pastime during the long winter time!

**Her parents** accepted the new found Mormon gospel, were baptized and immigrated to Nauvoo in the 1840's with other family members and Saints. Some of her family members are listed as living in the Second Ward in Nauvoo. Laurinda's family suffered the persecutions that were the lot of all the early day Saints. Her father, Elisha, helped build the Nauvoo Temple and did some pre Nauvoo Temple ordinances in the Mississippi River; and her parents did their own temple work in the Nauvoo Temple. He was a faithful body guard of the Prophet Joseph Smith and died at age sixty five from exposure to the elements while guarding the Prophet. Her younger sister, Annette Atwood Cummings, took care of her widowed mother, Anna. Her sweet mother, died two years later on her way to Winter Quarters. Her family was very close and the death of their parents was very hard on them. Four of her siblings and their families came to Utah.

She married a young man, Sumner Pinkham, who wouldn't come west. She had one son, Delvert Elisha Pinkham born June, 1844 in Nauvoo.

**Laurinda** lived in the home of the Prophet Joseph Smith and knew he was a true Prophet. She never lost her humble devout love, faith, and knowledge of the Gospel that she had accepted years ago, with her parents and siblings in Connecticut.

Laurinda met and married her second husband, Joseph Lee Robinson, at Winter Quarters. They were sealed by President Brigham Young on March 20, 1847.

From her husband's journal, he states: "While here, at Winter Quarters, I became acquainted with a lady by the name of Laurinda Atwood. We formed an attachment and agreed with the consent of my wives to marry. The President being agreeable, we were sealed at the house of E. T. Benson on March 20, 1847 by Pres. Brigham Young.

"President Young told me that **Laurinda** would be a blessing and comfort to me in my last days and her children would be an honor to me.

“Verily, if I had not been given a pretty good portion of faith, I certainly would not have dared to have taken so much responsibility? Being driven from my home, exiled in an Indian territory, not knowing whether we would ever find another home, but trusting in God!”

“The Holy Spirit said I should take **Laurinda Maria**; that it should be for the glory of God, and also for her good and my good. This may appear strange in this generation, but nevertheless it is verily true. If I had not taken her as my wife I would have been condemned of God.....”

In the spring of 1848 **Laurinda**, with her extended family, left Winter Quarters to travel west upon the Mormon trail. They were assigned to travel with Amasa M. Lyman's Company.

Her husband, Joseph Lee Robinson, recorded in his journal: “On Beaver Creek, my third wife, **Laurinda**, was delivered of a child, a fine daughter we named Jane. She, Jane Geneva, was born 14th of July, 1848. The mother and child are doing well, but the mother had to suffer a good deal as the child was born in the morning and the camp moved on the same day. We blessed **Laurinda**, and the Lord blessed her, and she was strengthened so that the camp was not hindered.”

We can imagine her suffering! Riding in a lumber wagon over rough, dusty roads with deep wagon ruts! As the wagon swayed from side to side as it lumbered along.

From Joseph Lee's Journal “.....We reached the height of the last mountain before dropping into the great Salt Lake Valley.....There was an emotion of feeling in our bosoms that we cannot describe. Suffice it to say that the valley looked good to us then. We descended and entered the valley, Oct. 1st 1848.”

**Laurinda** and her two children with the rest of the Robinson family, had a long, cold rough winter. Some lived in their traveling wagons and some lived in the two log cabins built from the timber cut in City Creek Canyon.

In March, 1849 her husband was ordained a bishop, by Elders C.C. Rich and E. Snow, of the North Cottonwood Ward. He was the first Bishop of Farmington, Utah. He moved his family to Cottonwood now known as Farmington, Utah.

The three wives worked closely together feeling their love of the gospel and love for each other! **Laurinda's** cheery spirit, quick decisive ways of doing everything, and strong faith, was great blessing to all. **Laurinda** was an excellent cook and could do wonders with food.

Last fall **Laurinda** had worked side by side with every one in their weakened condition; preparing the soil, planting, what ever was needed to be done. Their abundance of crops the next fall was over whelming. They had planted one little eye from a potato to each hill of dirt. When they harvested it they would get a twelve quart bucket of potatoes, or more, from each mound.

**Laurinda** and other family members could not believe what they were seeing, but her husband said, "How wonderful is the work of the Lord! He has placed elements in the soil which gives food and growth to the seed we sow."

**In November 1850 Laurinda** stayed in Salt Lake with her family and friends while her husband went to start a new settlement in Parowan, Utah. He took his wife, Susan, her children, and her faithful black man, John, to help settle Parowan.

She loved to visit in Salt Lake every opportunity she had as her two sisters, Annette Cummings and Jane Slade, lived in Salt Lake. Her husband spoke frequently of both girls in his journal.

From her husband's journal: "It is raining today. I took some lumber to Father Angels in Salt Lake City to make some **spinning wheels** so that our women can spin their wool and can make some wearing apparel for us. We are blessed with spinners."

**Laurinda** loved to use the spinning wheel and always had one in her front room. She was a very hard worker and knew if she used the talents the Lord had given her she would be blessed.

**Jedediah Nephi Robinson "Jeddy's birth"**, my grandfather, and **Laurinda's** second son's birth was recorded in her husband's journal: "Laurinda, my third wife, was delivered of a fine boy; weighing nine pounds. He was born at half past nine a.m. 'O, Lord, let him live and become a good, substantial man in Israel.' He was born December 1, 1857, and was named Jedediah Nephi Robinson, after his father's beloved friend, Jedediah M. Grant." (He was the Second Counselor to Pres. Brigham Young and father of our President Heber J. Grant.)

On May 19, 1859, **Laurinda**, and her family, left with Joseph for her new home in Mt. Green. When they arrived the spring water was so high it prevented them from moving onto the farm.. They had to stay with friends for three weeks waiting for the water level to subside.

In Joseph's journal he recorded: "**Laurinda** was very courageous. She packed her one and a half year old son, Jeddy, over a rough place at the Devil's Gate. The water in the road was such that she had to spring from rock to rock. I admired her ambition, she was a heroine. We got through all right and moved into our log cabin where she would be keeping house."

She was now pioneering Mountain Green "a new frontier". She lived here in the log cabin and then a larger house for 10 years. She raised her little family of nine children including her twin girls besides all the community service she did.

Her daughter, Jeanette Orilla, one of the twins said, "Mother was a faithful and devout believer of the gospel. She claimed that through the power of God she could heal any of her children when ill -- if she could put her hands on them. She was never too proud to have the old spinning wheel in the parlor; she was a spinner as were some of her daughters also. She lived in a log

cabin and had a hard time to keep the rain and frogs out because there was no door or floor.”

She was so happy in 1869 when she moved back to Farmington. President Brigham Young asked the Saints to plant mulberry trees along the street in Farmington. He wanted to raise silk worms and needed the large leaves as food for the larvae. Besides food for the silk worm larvae they are excellent shade trees. Mulberry trees still line the streets of Farmington today.

**Laurinda** had worked and trained in a silk factory in Connecticut. She told her husband she knew all about raising silk worms and could help supplement the family income with her earnings.

President Brigham Young asked **Laurinda** if she would raise silkworms. She said, “I would be pleased to.” So, President Young sent east, for five dollars worth of eggs; she raised those eggs; and then raised more eggs; and saved the cocoons, until she had raised enough to make the first silk dress made in Utah.

Quoted from the book “**MY FARMINGTON**”: “The silk industry was started in Farmington by **Laurinda Robinson**, wife of Bishop Joseph Lee Robinson. She was assisted by her daughter, Josephine “Aunt Phene”. In her home she had two rooms for her worms.

Quoted from Laurinda’s daughters, Josephine “Aunt Phene” R. Rose and Jeanette Orilla R. Clausen: “President Young and the General Authorities sent word for **Laurinda** to board the train at Farmington and travel to Ogden’s Stake Conference, as he wanted everyone to see her beautiful silk dress she had made from the silk worms. She was given special recognition for her accomplishment in the Silk Culture at the conference. She was asked to stand on a bench so all could see her ‘beautiful water waved silk dress’ she had made with her own hands.

She was praised for the silk fringe she spun, that was used on the curtains for the St. George Temple; also for her profitable business she had from the sale of her silk cocoons etc.”

Quoted from her daughter, Josephine, ‘Aunt Phene’: “The beautiful water waved silk dress was put in the Fair at St. Louis, Missouri. The dress was stolen from the Fair. The Fair Association paid **Laurinda** \$50.00 for the dress, but the dress was valued much more than that.

“My mother raised the silk, and made dresses, skirts, a shawl, a temple apron and many small pieces of silk. She has a dress, some small samples of silk and a silk display at the Capitol in Salt Lake City. Several times she took prizes at the yearly Utah State Fair, for her silk display there.

She also made the silk, and fashioned two beautiful wedding dresses, for the twin daughters, Aurilla and Lowella. My mother raised silk for weaving purposes and also raised silk worm eggs

to be distributed in the State of Utah. The State paid \$4.00 an ounce for eggs; and would buy all the cocoons she could raise.

My mother and Laurinda's granddaughter, Ethel Eliza Robinson Montague, remembers when she came to visit her relatives in Farmington; the fun she and the other children had, riding on wagons under the mulberry trees, laughing, singing and teasing. Each child held a gunny sack to fill with mulberry leaves and branches for "Aunt Phene" for the silk worms.

From her daughter : "Mother loved living in Farmington, where she worked many years as a teacher in the Relief Society, and I recall one time when Sisters Eliza R. Snow and Zina D. Young came up to a woman's meeting. One spoke in tongues while she was talking. When the interpretation was given she came up to mother and said, 'The Prophet Joseph Smith says he loves you as he did on earth, and for you to go on in the good work, and be faithful for the Savior will soon come.'"

May 18, 1884 Her husband recorded in his journal: "They received their tickets, and went through the House of the Lord, a heavenly sight." They attended the dedication of the Logan Temple.

November 15, 1884: "Aunt Laurinda and I started for Logan with recommends to go to the Logan Temple, to do work for our dead....."

November 22, 1884: "We left for home after having a spiritual rebirth in the Logan Temple."

**Laurinda** loved to go to the Endowment House and the Temple and did over 25 names for her Atwood and Hartshorn ancestors. She had promised her parents she would get their Ancestors family Temple work done. Her son, Jedediah Nephi, said, "Some of my happiest moments were spent with my mother in the Temple." I have the Atwood -- Hartshorn Temple Book where she and her sister, Annette A. Cummings, and Jedediah, are listed as doing many many names. These wonderful sisters and son (nephew) were beloved by their Heavenly Father to help get their relatives out of bondage.

**Laurinda** lived to comfort her husband in his old age, and was with him when he died. He peacefully passed away on New Years Day 1893. **Laurinda** died two years later. She died with great faith in the Gospel. Her last words were: "I have suffered a great deal, but it was for a great cause." She always exhorted her children to be faithful. She died March 1, 1895.





### HISTORICAL VIGNETTES

## Bishop Was Kept Busy

In the Church archives in Salt Lake City is a small, smudged and unimpressive-looking manuscript, in which there are only 16 pages of handwritten material.

It is the personal daybook of Joseph L. Robinson, bishop of the North Cottonwood Ward (later renamed the Farmington Ward) for the years 1849 and 1850. The incidents recorded in the valuable little document provide an important glimpse into the nature of the job of bishop 125 years ago.

Bishop Robinson selected his counselors and they were approved in a meeting May 6, 1849 in the John Harris home. Since there were no public buildings in the area and it was up to the bishop to see that facilities were provided for schools, church meetings and all other community activities, the bishopric's first task was to build a schoolhouse.

It was agreed to build the school, but construction was delayed because of the pressing work of building homes, raising food, clearing woods and preparing for winter.

It was agreed on Dec. 8, however, that an 18x24 foot log schoolhouse would be erected, and the people would be assessed a property tax to pay for it. The bishop not only was to collect the tax, but was also to help find a teacher and supervise the school. The people met in the finished building on New Year's Day to hear prayers and remarks by Bishop Robinson, then they had a "first-rate supper" and a pleasant evening party.

The bishop became a storekeeper, bookkeeper and recorder of private documents. On June 7, 1849, for example, a fast day, he collected 48 pounds of baked goods and \$1 cash to be distributed to the poor.

In July he recorded the will of a ward member. In August he had to locate six yoke of oxen, two wagons and two drivers to go out on the plains and meet incoming pioneers. He had to raise money—he called it taxes—to pay for repairs on the bowery, where public meetings were held until a building could be erected.

He was also elected justice of the peace of Davis County, and had to sit in judgment in civil and criminal affairs on the people. Maybe Joseph Robinson was no busier than the bishops of today, but certainly the "good

# THIS WEEK IN CHURCH HISTORY: A Message For Those Beyond The Veil

Jan. 1, 1890 — Patriarch Joseph Lee Robinson blessed a fellow patriarch.

With the patchwork quilt pulled up under his chin, the thin-faced old man looked out of sunken eye sockets at his fellow veteran of long years of pioneering and Church service.

The sick man's lips moved but no sound came out. His hair and his face were nearly as white as his pillow with its crocheted edge. He was dying.

Patriarch Joseph Lee Robinson laid his calloused hands on the dying patriarch's head and gave him a blessing, and a message of greeting to take to "all the saints and friends up there from relatives and friends down here."

He also blessed his old friend that he might be able to speak.

"Brother Robinson is a great and good man, a patriarch of the highest order. He shall hold that power and priesthood throughout life and all through eternity," the old man managed to say when the prayer was ended.

Patriarch Robinson himself was nearing that time when he would be able to carry messages to those "up there". He was too feeble to do the hard farm work that had filled his days for so long but often was called to bless the sick.

He had exercised this gift and power of the priesthood almost since the time 54 years before that he had joined the Church.

Then, his farm was 3,000 miles east in the State of New York. His brother, Ebenezer, came one day bringing the message of the Restored Gospel. Joseph accepted it and was baptized.

Maria, his wife, was skeptical. She wanted to stay with her old friends and church.



Joseph began talking of moving west to join the saints in Missouri. Maria was against it. Her friends encouraged her opposition saying they would help her if she wanted to stay rather than go with her husband. This brought on a quarrel.

Very well, Joseph said heatedly. "I'll go alone. I'll leave you the farm and all my property except what I need for the trip."

Her arguments failing, Maria cried. Joseph relented.

He would still go, but only when she was willing to go also. Seeing that the Church meant so much to her husband, Maria began to give it more careful consideration and, in time, was baptized.

Joseph became president of the branch and was called one day to administer to a very sick woman who was not a member of the Church. She was healed miraculously. This was the first of many administrations he performed.

For five years, he continued his work of presiding in the branch and preaching the Gospel to whomever would listen while waiting for Maria to assent to the move west. His patience was rewarded. On June 10, 1841, the Robinsons left their Rome, N.Y., farm and started west to Nauvoo, Ill.

They bought a small log cabin, and Joseph established himself in the chair-making business. Later, he built a brick home and turned one large room over to a teacher to operate as a school. When the Ninth Ward was organized, he became a counselor in the bishopric. Later he was sustained as bishop.

In 1846, the Robinsons moved westward again, forced by mobs to choose between their Church or their comfortable home. Joseph served as bishop of the Seventh Ward at Winter Quarters before continuing on to Salt Lake Valley in 1848. Again he was appointed to preside over a ward in what was known as North Cottonwood, now Farmington.

He helped colonize Parowan in southern Utah, built up his ward in Farmington, reared a large family and served during his later years as a patriarch. Until he was old and feeble, he worked hard to establish and maintain his farms in Davis, Weber and Iron counties. He died Jan. 1, 1893, just short of his 82nd birthday. —Arnold Irvine

Source — Journal of Joseph Lee Robinson edited by Rena Robinson Coffer.